

AIR POUCH FEB 1 / 1956

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
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DESP. NO.

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON

February 16, 1956

REF

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SUBJECT: Khrushchev Remarks on Neutrals

Because he classified Finland as a "neutral," Khrushchev's speech of February 14 to the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is of specific interest here. To the Embassy's knowledge this is the first time that a Soviet leader has called Finland a neutral. Finland has sometimes been identified within the U.S. Government as being, in effect, tied into the Soviet defense system by reason of its 1948 Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance with the USSR. My best judgment based on experience here thus far is that the Finnish Government, while desiring general acceptance as a neutral, would not previously have felt that it could categorically claim such status without fear of contradiction by the Soviets.

The Khrushchev statement appears consistent with the Soviet willingness to release the Porkkala naval base which in turn, aside from its broader motivations, implied a Soviet decision to permit Finland at least the appearance of a "looser rein". Finnish-Soviet relations since 1948 have not, in fact, involved any extreme applications of Soviet pressure on Finland, but in the absence of a Soviet hint to the contrary, most Finns assumed that the threat of such pressure persisted--as it undoubtedly did and still does.

The deeper meanings of the Khrushchev speech will, of course, be analyzed by others with access to more comprehensive information than is available here. As seen from one "neutral" country, however, this latest, explicit Soviet appeal seems to be of the greatest importance for United States objectives abroad. It recognizes one fact which may have been insufficiently emphasized in United States policy pronouncements, due to our necessary preoccupation in the past with the mobilization of free world military strength. The fact is that increased neutrality on the part of countries in equivocal positions may even benefit the free world if it represents a step away from subordination to Soviet control. Viewed thus, the Khrushchev statement concerning Finland and Austria may have been designed to stigmatize them as neutrals in American eyes, in the hope that the term would provoke ill-considered attacks on them as "shirkers of their obligations" to "sign up" along with other free-world members of NATO, SEATO, etc.

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Signature
G. H. Miller
REPORTER

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The shifts of emphasis in United States policy to meet changing Soviet tactics (e.g., strengthening of the Article 2 relationship within NATO) apparently have not yet penetrated the public consciousness in countries like Finland. This is not too serious here, where suspicion of Russia is inherited. The general danger in this Soviet "love my neighbor" approach is that public opinion in countries not as fully alert to the Soviet threat may conclude that the United States and its allies actually are reluctant to respond to Soviet invitations to relax international tensions. The resulting tendency would be toward an isolation of the United States from the uncommitted countries of the world. Psychologically, this danger is accentuated if the presidential elections should produce any appearance of hiatus or faltering of American leadership.

These thoughts are submitted for what they may be worth even though they surely have no great novelty, and to re-emphasize the need for continuing (as in the recent presentation of foreign aid appropriation requests) to state with candor and dignity that American foreign policy is broad enough to comprehend the situations of the formally uncommitted, as well as the partly committed and the wholly committed countries of the free world.

John D. Hickerson
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